

# BLESS – Listen

## Welcome and opening prayers

**What happened last week?** (15 mins – sharing around the room or in small groups) Last week we made the commitment to begin with prayer.

- Where did you focus your prayers?
- How was your experience of beginning with prayer?
- How did beginning with prayer help you understand your neighbourhood and networks and what God is doing there?

## Introduction (10 mins)

Watch “Michael Frost – Adopt a Posture of Listening” at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2TtyIQ3ous>

After talking with God, BLESS intentionally talks with and especially *listens* to people. There is nothing better for fostering meaningful relationships. If you are serious about listening, be encouraged to:

- ask curious questions
- listen to people’s stories and struggles
- listen for challenges and opportunities
- listen for what people are proud of and what they are working through.

If we want to understand people, it takes more than observing them from a distance. As we listen to people, let’s listen also to for what God is doing, and where God might want us to cooperate.

- How might you be able to make time and space for the opportunity to listen to people like this as you seek to BLESS?

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## “Listen” Bible Study (15 mins)

Read Luke 18:35-42 through twice. On the second reading imagine yourself in the scene.

- What do you like about this story?
- What do you learn about Jesus and his approach to listening and mission in the passage?

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- What do you learn about how Jesus would have you follow him in this approach?

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Share your ideas with one another

## Listen to your Neighbourhood and People (20 mins)

Our goal this week is to listen to someone outside of your immediate family group. Listening to people is what Jesus did and an important part of developing a missional rhythm of life.

- What do you find easy/hard about listening?

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- What principles and skills can help us listen well to people?

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- In what ways can we also listen to God as we listen to people in our neighbourhood?

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- Who might God be inviting you to listen to in the week ahead?

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Listening also may even *change* us and our perspectives. Alan Alda (famous as acting Hawkeye in MASH) wrote in his book *Never Have Your Dog Stuffed: And Other Things I've Learned*: How might listening to your neighbourhood change you and your church?

## Prayer – (10 mins)

Pray with one another about the people and situations on your heart, and about the people you will listen to in the next week. Pray that we will all be able to create spaces that make people feel loved and understood.

Exercise before the next session: Over the coming week look for and make the most of opportunities to listen to people in your neighbourhood and networks. Seek to talk to and listen to at least two different people. Ask curious questions to get to know them and how they see the world. As you listen to people, be attentive and seek to listen also to God.

## BLESS Promise

*In order to be a blessing I want to commit to....*

Listen

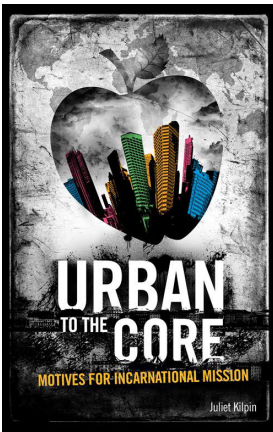
I will seek to listen to \_\_\_\_\_

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Jesus, preserve us from the trappings of church life,

**From endless discussions,  
About things that have no weight  
Or relevance in your kingdom.**

Jesus, protect us from distractions and trinkets

**That blur your vision in us.**

Jesus, deepen in us a love for the rhythms that surround us;

**The cultural joys of our streets and parks and homes  
And places of refuge.**

Raise up among us

**Men and women,  
Young people and children  
With the gifts needed to build your kingdom here**

Give us the sight to spot the gifts already here

**That need to be encouraged,**

And given oxygen,

light,

compost

whatever it takes for these gifts to grow!

**Make us muck-loving gardeners in your kingdom!**

Lord, in your mercy,

**Let your kingdom come!**

(from Sian Murray-Williams, in Juliet Kilpin's *Urban to the Core*)